

Amendments to the claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of claims:

Claims 1-66 (canceled).

67 (new): An oligonucleotide primer comprising DNA having a length of 15 to 40 nucleotides and including a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 5, SEQ ID NO: 6, SEQ ID NO: 7, and sequences fully complementary thereto.

68 (new): The oligonucleotide primer according to claim 67 consisting of a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 6, SEQ ID NO: 7, and sequences fully complementary thereto.

69 (new): The oligonucleotide primer according to claim 67 including a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 3, and sequences fully complementary thereto.

70 (new): The oligonucleotide primer according to claim 67 consisting of SEQ ID NO: 2, or a sequence fully complementary thereto.

71 (new): The oligonucleotide primer according to claim 67 consisting of SEQ ID NO: 3 or a sequence fully complementary thereto.

72 (withdrawn – new): The oligonucleotide primer according to claim 67 consisting of SEQ ID NO: 4 or a sequence fully complementary thereto.

73 (withdrawn – new): The oligonucleotide primer according to claim 67 consisting of SEQ ID NO: 5 or a sequence fully complementary thereto.

74 (withdrawn – new): The oligonucleotide primer according to claim 67 consisting of SEQ ID NO: 6 or a sequence fully complementary thereto.

75 (withdrawn – new): The oligonucleotide primer according to claim 67 consisting of SEQ ID NO: 7 or a sequence fully complementary thereto.

76 (new): A method of hybridizing with and amplifying a nucleic acid from a hepatitis B virus (HBV) comprising the steps of

– hybridizing with and amplifying the nucleic acid from HBV with a primer consisting of an oligonucleotide as defined in claim 67.

77 (new): A method of hybridizing a probe with a nucleic acid comprising the step of hybridizing a nucleic acid from HBV with an oligonucleotide probe having a length of 15 to 40 nucleotides and including a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 8, SEQ ID NO: 9, SEQ ID NO: 10, SEQ ID NO: 11, and sequences fully complementary thereto.

78 (new): The method according to claim 77, wherein the oligonucleotide includes a sequence of SEQ ID NO: 8 or a sequence fully complementary thereto.

79 (new): The method according to claim 77, wherein the oligonucleotide consists of a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 8, SEQ ID NO: 9, SEQ ID NO: 10, SEQ ID NO: 11, and sequences fully complementary thereto.

80 (new): The method according to claim 77, wherein the oligonucleotide includes a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 8, SEQ ID NO: 9, SEQ ID NO: 10, SEQ ID NO: 11, and sequences fully complementary thereto, and wherein the oligonucleotide carries a fluorophore moiety at one terminus and a quencher moiety at the other terminus.

81 (withdrawn – new): The method according to claim 80, wherein the oligonucleotide consists of a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 12, SEQ ID NO: 13; SEQ ID NO: 14, and SEQ ID NO: 15, and wherein the oligonucleotide carries a fluorophore moiety at one terminus and a quencher moiety at the other terminus.

82 (withdrawn – new): The method according to claim 78, wherein the oligonucleotide consists of a sequence of SEQ ID NO: 12, wherein the oligonucleotide and carries a fluorophore moiety at one terminus and a quencher moiety at the other terminus.

83 (new): A set of oligonucleotides comprising

- an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 2, and
- at least one oligonucleotide selected from the group consisting of an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 5, SEQ ID NO: 6, and SEQ ID NO: 7, each oligonucleotide having a length of 15 to 40 nucleotides.

84 (new): A set of oligonucleotides according to claim 83 consisting of

- oligonucleotide SEQ ID NO: 2 and
- at least one oligonucleotide selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 6, and SEQ ID NO: 7.

85 (new): A set of oligonucleotides according to claim 83 comprising an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 2 and an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 3.

86 (new): A set of oligonucleotides according to claim 85 consisting of SEQ ID NO: 2 and SEQ ID NO: 3.

87 (new): A set of oligonucleotides according to claim 83 consisting of

- (i) an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 2 and an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 4;
- (ii) an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 2 and an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 5;
- (iii) an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 2 and an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 6;
- (iv) an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 2 and an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 7;
- (v) an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 2, oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 4, and an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 5; and
- (vi) an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 2, an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 6, and an oligonucleotide including SEQ ID NO: 7.

88 (new): A set of oligonucleotides comprising

- (a) a set of oligonucleotides according to claim 83 and
- (b) an oligonucleotide having a length of 15 to 40 nucleotides and including a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 8, SEQ ID NO: 9, SEQ ID NO: 10, SEQ ID NO: 11, and sequences fully complementary thereto.

89 (withdrawn – new): A set of oligonucleotides comprising

- (a) a set of oligonucleotide according to claim 83 and
- (b) an oligonucleotide consisting of a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 12, SEQ ID NO: 13, SEQ ID NO: 14, and SEQ ID NO: 15 and carrying a fluorophore moiety at one terminus, and a quencher moiety at the other terminus.

90 (new): A set of oligonucleotides comprising

- (a) a set of oligonucleotides according to claim 84 and
- (b) an oligonucleotide having a length of 15 to 40 nucleotides and including a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 8, SEQ ID NO: 9, SEQ ID NO: 10, SEQ ID NO: 11, and sequences fully complementary thereto.

91 (new): A set of oligonucleotides that comprising

- (a) a set of oligonucleotides according to claim 85 and

(b) an oligonucleotide having a length of 15 to 40 nucleotides and including a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 8 or a sequence fully complementary thereto.

92 (withdrawn – new): A set of oligonucleotides comprising

- (a) a set of oligonucleotides according to claim 85 and
- (b) an oligonucleotide consisting of a sequence of SEQ ID NO: 12 and carrying a fluorophore moiety at one terminus and a quencher moiety at the other terminus.

93 (new): A method for specifically detecting a HBV by amplification in a biological sample, the method comprising the steps of

- (a) contacting a set of oligonucleotides according to claim 83 with a biological sample or nucleic acid preparation obtained from a biological sample under conditions suitable for the oligonucleotides to hybridize to a HBV nucleic acid present in the sample,
- (b) amplifying the HBV nucleic acid using the oligonucleotides as primers, and
- (c) detecting the amplification product and, thereby, indicating the presence of a HBV in the biological sample.

94 (new): The method according to claim 93, wherein the HBV nucleic acid is amplified by polymerase chain reaction.

95 (new): The method according to claim 93, wherein the detection of the amplification product is performed by using an oligonucleotide having a length of 14 to 40 nucleotides and including a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 8, SEQ ID NO: 9, SEQ ID NO: 10, SEQ ID NO: 11, and sequences fully complementary thereto and detectably labeled and useful as a probe.

96 (new): The method according to claim 95, wherein the oligonucleotide carries a fluorophore moiety at one terminus, and a quencher moiety at the other terminus and a quencher moiety at the other terminus.

97 (withdrawn – new): The method according to claim 95, wherein the oligonucleotide is SEQ ID NO: 12, SEQ ID NO: 13, SEQ ID NO: 14 or SEQ ID NO: 15.

98 (new): The method according to claim 93, wherein the detection of the amplification product is performed by using an oligonucleotide having a length of 15 to 40 nucleotides and including a sequence of SEQ ID NO: 8 or a sequence fully complementary thereto and carrying a fluorophore moiety at one terminus and a quencher moiety at the other terminus.

99 (withdrawn – new): The method according to claim 98, wherein the oligonucleotide including a sequence of SEQ ID NO: 8 or a sequence fully complementary thereto is SEQ ID NO: 12.

100 (new): A kit for amplifying HBV in a biological sample, which kit comprises

- at least one set of oligonucleotides according to claim 83 useful as primers and
- means for amplifying a HBV nucleic acid to obtain an amplified product.

101 (new): The kit according to claim 100, which further comprises means for detection of the amplified product.

102 (new): The kit according to claim 100, wherein the means for amplifying the HBV nucleic acid is means for amplification by polymerase chain reaction.

103 (new): The kit according to claim 100 wherein the at least one set of oligonucleotides comprises an oligonucleotide having a length of 15 to 40 nucleotides and including a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 8, SEQ ID NO: 9, SEQ ID NO: 10, SEQ ID NO: 11, and sequences fully complementary thereto and detectably labeled and useful as a probe.

104 (withdrawn – new): The kit according to claim 103, wherein the oligonucleotide is SEQ ID NO: 12, SEQ ID NO: 13, SEQ ID NO: 14, or SEQ ID NO: 15.

105 (new): The kit according to claim 100 wherein the at least one set of oligonucleotides comprises an oligonucleotide having a length of 15 to 40 nucleotides and including a sequence of SEQ ID NO: 8 or a sequence fully complementary thereto and detectably labeled and useful as a probe.

106 (withdrawn – new): The kit according to claim 105 wherein the oligonucleotide is SEQ ID NO: 12.